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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Rural Electrification Administration
Washington 25, D. C.

May 8, 1950

To : All REA Employees
From : Administrator
Subject: Action on Field and Departmental Suggestions - Second Report

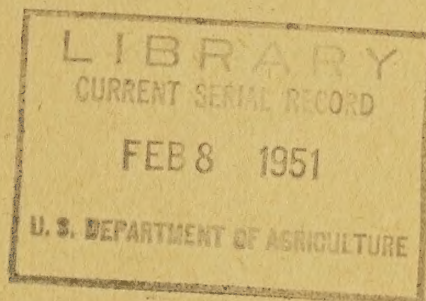
This is the second and final report concerning the suggestions submitted by our employees during the field and headquarters conferences held last summer.

We are indebted to our fellow employees for a large number of worthwhile suggestions. Many of these have already been adopted and more are under consideration, and are likely to be adopted in some form. All of you may take pride in your part in the improvements which will result from your ideas and which will enable us to serve better the public in the conduct of the overall program of the Administration.

I wish to thank each of you for the intelligent interest which you have in the affairs of REA and urge that you continue to make any suggestions which in your opinion will aid us in executing our responsibilities in connection with the vital programs of rural electrification and rural telephony.

Claude R. Wickard

Attachment



Finance Matters. Difficulty is being experienced in finance matters for power-type borrowers. At the present time procedures for distribution-type borrowers are principally being employed in the processing of requisitions, budgets, audits, etc. In view of the increasing number of power cooperatives and the specialized handling of finance matters required, it is requested that a special section be established for this purpose. (Washington-Power-12)

In the past the bulk of the work in the Finance Division related to distribution systems and therefore the thinking and procedures were along these lines. The possibility has been considered of establishing a separate section in the Finance Division for the purpose of handling finance matters of power-type borrowers. However, it appears more practicable from an organizational standpoint to continue this function on the present regional basis. Power and Finance Divisions have jointly developed tentative finance procedures for power-type borrowers and they are being tested in actual practice. If they prove to be adequate, these procedures will be officially adopted.

Inspection Service. REA should set up an inspection service. Engineers in this service whose duty would be to go to various manufacturers and witness tests on equipment. This service would be similar to that now prevailing on pole inspection (Washington-Power-14)

Our pole inspection service has been of great assistance to borrowers and it is natural to give consideration to the performance of similar service with respect to other items of material used on distribution and transmission lines. However, when the number of manufacturers and the number of separate items are considered, it is apparent that this service could not be performed without an extremely large engineering staff. At various times some of our engineers have been able to witness tests on a few items of equipment but with our present and foreseeable future engineering staff we will not be able to expand this service.

There should be more coordination of section activities between section heads and other individuals of the section so that all are informed as to activities being conducted by the section. If section head operates independently and fails to keep other members of section fully informed it makes for poor coordination, particularly when questions arise while section head is absent. (Washington-TSD-2)

Increased coordination between section heads and other employees in the section is desirable. Therefore, weekly meetings of the staffs of the various sections in the Technical Standards Division are now being held to exchange information and future plans. In addition, copies of the most important items of incoming and outgoing correspondence are routed to the various individuals of the section in order to disseminate information concerning the activities of the section.

Notices of meetings of AIEE, etc., should be speeded up so that interested people are informed in time to attend. A procedure should be developed

whereby circulation of information between offices is made rapid enough that publications are not out of date by the time they reach the persons most interested in them. If some individual on the distribution list is absent from his office the article should not be held up until his return. (Washington-TSD-3)

Notices of this type are no longer routed throughout the Division, but to save time are posted on the Division bulletin board.

Files should be cleared of old and little used material. Records of a permanent nature which are out of date should be sent to central records. Time should be allotted for revising the files in TSD so that engineers and clerks may work together in setting up and keeping up a good filing system in the Division. Section heads should place importance in the establishing of good filing systems and the systems should be based on simplicity. Poor filing systems result in much lost time and inefficient operations. (Washington-TSD-7)

This suggestion is being carried out. The Communications and Records Management Section, Administrative Services Division, is now assisting the Division in accomplishing this task, in disposing of obsolete material and in establishing filing systems.

Borrowed books and other articles should be returned promptly to offices from which they are borrowed. (Washington-TSD-8)

The Chief of the Division has called the attention of all employees to the responsibility of each individual for the prompt return of borrowed books and other material.

The Division should be furnished with a camera so that personnel may take pictures of electrical installations when on field trips. There is a definite need for good pictures for use in various REA publications. (Washington-TSD-10)

Arrangements are in existence with the Exhibits Unit, Publications and Exhibits Services Section, Information Services Division, for the personnel of Technical Standards as well as other divisions to be furnished with a camera for use on field trips.

Overtime should be paid to field personnel and employees on field trips working more than eight hours per day in the field. (Washington-TSD-15)

Employees on field trips or in Washington are not ordinarily required to work overtime. In those special instances when such work is necessary administrative approval prior to the overtime work is required in order that compensation may be obtained.

In many cases persons are required to perform travel on week ends on their own time on Government business. Travellers should not be required to travel on week ends unless absolutely necessary (Washington-TSD-16)

The carrying out of REA program frequently requires that employees travel on week ends in order to meet commitments. The Comptroller General has ruled that such travel during non-work hours does not represent official work but the traveler is, however, in official travel status.

The policy of dismissing employees during hot weather should be standard throughout the government. (Washington-Pers.-2)

The temperature and humidity conditions under which government employees are dismissed during hot weather have been standardized. However, since the temperature varies from building to building, it is obvious that the conditions for dismissal are not met throughout the government at the same time.

Although much of the rough-draft material submitted by the Regional offices within a division to the Stenographic Pool is to be typed on a standard form, each Region varies in its requirements for the finished copy. The suggestion was made that the divisions either have standard requirements for all its regions, or that each region give more explicit instructions on the transmittal slips. (Washington-Pers.-4)

This is a very good suggestion and all divisions as a matter of good business practice should establish standard requirements for its regions or offices or that it require explicit instructions on the transmittal slips sent to the Stenographic Pool.

The Stenographic Pool should be supplied with the latest edition of an unabridged dictionary to settle questions, particularly in regard to the correct hyphenation of words. (Washington-Pers.-1)

This suggestion is accepted and an order has been placed for a new unabridged dictionary.

It has been requested that conferences such as this be held in locations where hotel accommodations are more reasonable in price and do not require expenditures in excess of per diem allowance for subsistence. Meetings should be limited to two regions as it is believed that better results will be obtained. (Chic.-Fin.-3)

It is suggested that future meetings of this kind be held in smaller communities so conferees will not become scattered, because of the morale building effect of closer association with co-workers. It was thought that the aid of the Division of International Conferences of the State Department be sought in this regard. (Chicago-Mgmt.-2) (Chicago-Eng.-1, Chicago-Fin.-3)

It was the consensus that the handling of the rooming problem by the Congress Hotel was very unsatisfactory, in many cases no regard seemingly having been taken of reservations which were confirmed. (Chicago-Mgmt.-3)

These suggestions have been referred to the Committee making arrangements for the next field conferences for consideration.

A definite follow-up should be set up to inform the field representatives of action taken with respect to items in his report which were referred to other divisions. (Jackson-Mgmt.-5)

That field representatives be advised of any action or deferral of action taken on recommendations set forth in Field Activities reports and that, in the event of referral of the recommendation to another division, the reporting field representative be kept informed of actions taken by the divisions to which referral was made. (Cheyenne-Mgmt.-6)

It was mentioned that frequently suggestions are made in field reports about management problems upon which apparently no action has been taken, or if so, no advice has been furnished the fieldman. (Chicago-Mgmt.-4)

It is the responsibility of Washington supervisors to see that problems presented by their field staffs are properly handled or called to the attention of appropriate officers for follow-up, and that the field employees concerned are kept informed, to the extent practicable, of succeeding developments.

Considerable discussion on the use and necessity of the Semi-Monthly Time Report developed the following questions:

- (a) Is it serving a useful purpose?
- (b) Could it be prepared on a monthly basis?
- (c) Could it be prepared for a sample period and the results expanded to a yearly basis?

If the answer to the first question is in the negative, it was strongly urged that the report be eliminated. (Jackson-Mgmt.-7)

The Semi-Monthly Time Report is in the process of revision and these points are being given consideration.

Poor lighting conditions and insufficient desk space exist in most borrowers' offices. These conditions interfere with efficient audit production. (Cheyenne-Fin.-13)

If any REA representative finds lighting or space conditions in a co-op office so bad that work cannot be performed efficiently, he should report fully in order that the cooperative may be assisted in improving these conditions.

Consideration should be given to providing written constructive criticism on field reports which were inadequate or incomplete. (Jackson-Mgmt.-6)

I would like to remind regional heads of all divisions that it is their continuing responsibility to provide constructive criticism of any field reports which may be inadequate or incomplete.

A suggestion was made that the approving of release of liens on automotive equipment be eliminated. Another suggestion was made that, first of all,

we dispense with the necessity of putting a lien on vehicles; which, in turn, calls for the approval of the release of lien. It was also brought out that the Regional heads have tried to dispense with this procedure and the Solicitor's Office is working on it now. (Washington-Mgmt.-2)

While a complete solution to the problem has not yet been found we have developed a procedure which is reasonably quick and simple in those cases in which a release is required.

The question was raised as to what use is made by our field men of all carbon copies of correspondence sent to them. It seems that pertinent information incorporated in some of the copies of letters was not followed through. It was finally suggested that we look into the procedure of getting copies of letters to the field to see if any improvements can be made. (Washington-Mgmt.-5)

It is the general practice to keep the field representatives informed regarding the activities of the borrowers in their areas by sending them copies of correspondence to these borrowers. When visiting any borrower, the field representative should review his copies of correspondence to that borrower to determine whether there are any items which should be followed up.

The Suggestion Awards Committee seems to have side-stepped some of the main issues of the last gripe session. For instance: the reply to the suggestion that the Administrator's Office be moved to the South Building was: "The Advantages of keeping the Administrator's Office where it is outweigh the disadvantages." This is not felt to be an adequate reply. Another instance: The answer to the suggestion concerning questionnaires was "The Budget Office must approve all questionnaires." This reply did not answer the question raised. (Washington-TSD-9)

I have reviewed carefully the answers to these two suggestions made at last year's gripe sessions and I am unable to determine in what respect the replies failed to answer the questions raised. It is my feeling that the answers were direct to the questions raised. For the benefit of all employees, I am repeating below the two questions and the answers to them.

We feel that the Administrator's Office should be in the same building with the rest of REA. This would save a lot of time spent in walking back and forth from one building to the other. It would save time on the part of messengers and those making mail deliveries. (ISD-10)

Generally, it would be desirable to have all REA offices as close together as possible. However, it has been found that the advantages to REA of having the Administrator's Office in the Administration Building outweigh the disadvantages.

Approval of Forms and Questionnaires by the Bureau of Budget: It is difficult to get forms and questionnaires to be used for investigation purposes approved by the Bureau of Budget. Great

amount of work and study can be expended and then entire study as to method and purpose is passed on by the Bureau of Budget, and in some instances studies cannot be completed because the form to secure data is not approved by that office. It should be determined whether the Budget Bureau is responsible to prevent duplication of studies and questionnaires or whether it has the authority to determine whether a study is necessary, what it should constitute, and how it should be conducted. (Tech.Stds.-3)

All forms and questionnaires to be filled in by outside persons and returned to government agencies are subject to the approval of the Bureau of Budget in accordance with the Federal Reports Act of 1942.

The Technical Standards Division should be represented on the Suggestion Awards Committee. (Washington-TSD-5)

The regulations governing suggestions awards committees provide that membership shall represent activities rather than organizational units. The REA committee now has two engineers representing engineering activities. However, consideration will be given to this suggestion when changes are made in the Committee's membership.

Blanket authority should be obtained for emergency photographic reproductions of limited quantity to reduce the time involved in getting these reproductions. A method should be devised whereby reproduction work can be taken directly to the office where the work is done. This applies to items which do not require a policy clearance. The method of requisitioning duplicating should be simplified so that it is easier to trace an order requesting duplication, etc. Each requisition is assigned a different number by each office it passes through. When attempts are made to trace the request no office seems to know what number is applicable. (Washington-TSD-11)

A method has been in use for sometime whereby photographic reproductions can be obtained quickly when an emergency exists. Every reproduction and duplication requisition requires an order number before it can be processed. In emergencies, the Executive Officer's office will obtain this number so that the requisition (Standard Form AD-270) and material can be taken directly to the duplicating office. There appears to be some misunderstanding as to the numbering of requisitions for duplication. Only one number is given to a requisition. Anyone wanting to know the status of a requisition for duplication may find out by calling Extension 4676. Information on the status of emergency orders referred to above may be obtained by calling Extension 3810. It should be remembered that our duplication work is done by a central duplicating unit that serves the entire Department of Agriculture and that it is necessary for that unit to schedule REA work along with that from other agencies.

It was brought out by one of the employees of this unit that as a new employee a year previously she had had difficulty understanding the language peculiar to REA and felt that people in other divisions would

have the same difficulty. This employee suggested that some type of glossary be attached to the filing outline handed out so that a better understanding could be had of the work being done. (Washington-ASD-41)

The need for such a glossary has been recognized and a Committee was established more than two years ago for this purpose. However, before the Committee completed its work, the Federal Power Commission issued a comprehensive glossary of electrical terms. It was considered at the time that this glossary made unnecessary a separate REA glossary and a large number of copies of the FPC glossary was obtained and distributed to the REA staff. Copies of this glossary are available from the Training Section of the Personnel Division and are distributed to new employees. It may be that this glossary does not meet the needs of everyone and any suggestions would be appreciated by the Training Section.

One argument on transmission line as far as the fieldman is concerned is that there are no fieldmen to do inspection, and engineers and contractors ask you to look at the line and give advice and opinion. It is confusing why there is a difference in the division set-up to build the same type of line in approximately the same areas. From the fieldman's point of view in the field a line is a line. Yet, in one case you know all about it and in the other case, nothing. Yet, you are asked to give advice and assistance to engineers and contractors in both cases. In case of Power Division jobs, we are not familiar with the plans and specifications and contracts, and are at a disadvantage to give advice.

Samples:	Kamo	-	Mo. 48
	Western Electric	-	Okla. 31
	Sho-me	-	Mo. 49
	Sho-me	-	Mo. 18
	Mo. 60	-	Mo. 31
	Mo. 60	-	Mo. 38

(Jackson-Eng.-7)

Request that all matters in connection with the construction of transmission lines be delegated to the Engineering Division in order to avoid confusion that has occurred in the past. (Chicago-Engr.-7)

The responsibilities for transmission line activities as assigned to the Power and Engineering Divisions by Administrative Memorandum (G-M1) have been reviewed and I feel that the present arrangement is working satisfactorily. This is particularly true since the Power Division has secured additional engineers to handle its field inspections. The separation of transmission line activities between the two divisions arises primarily because of the differences between power-type and distribution-type borrowers. All design, construction and management activities of power-type borrowers are the responsibility of the Power Division while the Engineering Division is responsible for all construction and Engineering activities for distribution-type borrowers.

That material of a general nature mailed to field personnel and borrowers be reduced to a necessary minimum and that consideration be given to

segregating administrative directives and divisional memoranda from information releases so as to insure proper attention of the former items and, further, that consideration be given to reducing the physical size of all these directive memoranda through the use of offset printing and a better grade of paper stock as is now the practice of the Technical Standards Division. (Cheyenne-Mgmt.-5)

There seems to be some disagreement among field employees as to whether REA duplicated material should be sent to them in one package or in several envelopes. Generally, most suggestions favor one envelope wherever possible not only because of convenience but also because of economy in mailing. As you know, our postage expense is based primarily on the number of pieces of mail.

At the present time we are endeavoring to use a better grade of paper for material that is relatively permanent and mimeograph paper for material of a non-permanent nature. The size of duplicated memoranda is dependent primarily on the wishes of the several divisions and consideration is being given to a smaller size such as has been adopted by the Finance Division for its Uniform System of Accounts and Handbook for Field Auditors.

The Engineering Forms used within the Engineering Division should be simplified and consolidated to eliminate useless repetition. (Washington-Eng-6)

A committee chosen from the stenographers, secretaries, and engineers of the Engineering Division should be appointed to investigate and make specific recommendations on this matter. (Washington-Engr.-7)

A representative Committee of the type suggested has been appointed by the Chief of the Engineering Division. Its primary purpose will be to review periodically all forms being used by the Engineering Division for possible elimination, consolidation, and simplification.

Field engineers should be promptly advised of approvals of deviation from established procedures given by Washington staff in personal or telephone conferences. (Jackson-Engr.-8)

Request that a summary of commitments made in Washington conferences to system officials and their engineers be forwarded immediately to the proper field engineer before the conferees return home. (Chicago-Engr.-5)

All Washington employees are again reminded that our field representatives act in accordance with the standard and accepted policies of REA, and because it is to their advantage to be fully informed of any variations in policy or its interpretations, it is essential that they be kept posted up-to-date on the results of Washington conferences involving the engineers, borrowers, and contractors who seek their advice and guidance. It is the responsibility of the field representatives' supervisors in Washington to make certain that they are furnished with a resume of the results and the decisions reached at such meetings here in Washington.

It was suggested that employees of REA not remove letters from a file, either by jerking or otherwise, in order that they would not have to retain an entire file. This removal of correspondence involved more work because of having to make out receipts for individuals and also having to thumb way back into a file to replace correspondence removed. (Washington-Adm. Ser.-2)

We strongly concur in this suggestion since it represents a method of saving time and making more man hours available for other important tasks.

It was suggested that each division again be instructed to put cooperative designations on all correspondence. (Washington-Adm. Ser.-4)

In addition, it would also help if the cooperatives put the co-op designations on their correspondence. (Washington-Adm. Ser.-4a)

In order to promote efficiency in filing it is requested that in each office supervisors have the borrowers designation placed on each incoming piece of correspondence before placing it in the file basket. This would make it unnecessary for us to suggest to the borrowers any changes in their present style of correspondence.

It was recommended that all field people receiving personal mail in the Washington office advise their correspondents to place their division on the envelope as part of the address to facilitate delivery. (Washington Adm. Ser.-6)

Personal mail should not be addressed to the office unless absolutely necessary. However, when it is addressed to the office, field representatives should advise their prospective correspondents of the proper division to which the mail should be directed.

Field employees should be notified of any holidays other than those specified in memorandum dated several months ago in sufficient time to take advantage of same. (Chicago-Fin.-4)

There are no holidays other than the standard holidays listed in Executive Order No. 9636, that apply to both Washington and field employees. Inauguration day is a holiday for employees in the Washington area only. When offices in which field employees are working are closed in observance of a state or local holiday, field employees are automatically excused from work during that time, and when such occasions arise the time report submitted should bear the notation "State (or local) holiday--Office Closed".

The responsibility of obtaining the contractors final receipt, step CRR, should be that of the Finance Division instead of the Engineering Division. It was pointed out that the final receipt forms and instructions are sent to the borrower by the Finance Division after construction is complete and the final inventory approved. Under present procedures the Engineering Division has the responsibility of following up on action initiated by the Finance Division which is awkward, to say the least. (Washington-Eng.-3)

In agreement with this suggestion this responsibility was returned to the Finance Division in the latter part of 1949.

The present budget should be simplified and consolidated. The present budget consists of many different items such as construction, system improvements, transformers, substations, work order labor, work order material, and engineering which could be consolidated as one item. The control of the individual purposes within this item should be the sole responsibility of the Engineering Division. This step would greatly reduce the work of both the Finance and Engineering Division and at the same time make the budget more easily understandable by our borrowers. (Washington-Engr.-4)

The entire budget structure should be examined by a special committee for the purpose of simplifying and consolidating it along the lines suggested above. (Washington-Engr.-5)

We would like to have Form FI-121B, Expenditure Report, printed on yellow paper as in the past. They are now being printed on white paper and are being confused with the requisition forms by the cooperatives as well as by the Washington office. (Washington-Fin.-5)

Revised procedures including new budget forms are in the process of being approved at the present time and simplification was one of the factors entering into the revision. Present plans call for these procedures to be placed in full operation by July 1. With the inauguration of the new procedures, expenditure report forms will again be printed on yellow paper.

The #1 copies of the expenditure reports have been permitted to remain in the regional office without being filed, and the stacks have become very hazardous indeed. Central Files will not accept this material due to lack of filing space. Permitted to be thrown around in this manner, they are subject to being torn, mutilated and even lost. (Washington-Fin.-1)

This condition has existed during the past due to our critical shortage of filing space. However, recent arrangements have been made for filing space in another building. It is anticipated that certain of our file material will be moved within the next few weeks. This will permit us to remedy the situation with respect to expenditure reports.

It was suggested that all requests for travel advances be submitted at least 48 hours prior to travel, otherwise travelers would not receive the money before they left. (Washington-Adm. Ser.-9)

This suggestion is of importance to every traveler who may desire a travel advance. In order to permit orderly processing of advances in REA and to avoid unnecessary interruption of work in the Treasury Department, travelers are urged to apply for travel advances as soon as their travel authorizations are approved.

REA field people and co-ops should be encouraged to order publications early enough so they can be sent by regular mail and yet meet deadlines. (Much postage is used for airmail and special delivery stamps because orders are not received early enough.) (Washington-Info. Ser.-6)

The attention of the field staff is called to this suggestion which should be followed in the interest of achieving every possible economy.

Employees should see that material circulated within the division is kept moving; if a person cannot give attention to such material within a reasonable time, he should put his name on the bottom of the list and send it along to the next person; the last person on the list should send such material to the office of the Division Chief for disposition. (Washington-Infor. Ser.-8)

This suggestion has been called to the attention of the Division staff. This is a very good suggestion for speeding up the circulation of material and should be made a general practice throughout the agency.

Some method should be developed of spreading work so that employees may take small amounts of annual leave at times without upsetting what has been planned. (The opinion was expressed that some employees of the division have accumulated large amounts of annual leave because it has been difficult for them to be away from their jobs.) (Washington-Info. Ser.-9)

Supervisors are urged to plan their work assignments in such a manner so that no employee will be prevented from taking his annual leave.

Request more time for "gripe" session, and that meeting be set at some time other than just before noon. (Cheyenne-Engr.-1)

Program committees for future conferences are urged to take this suggestion into consideration and provide additional time for gripe sessions.

Division employees should be more careful not to order excess supplies. (Washington-Info. Ser.-7)

All employees are urged to comply with this suggestion and order only items essential to their work in reasonable quantity in order to avoid excess stock.

Concerning increased per diem and mileage allowances. (Jackson-Engr.-1-2-3 - Cheyenne-Engr.-5 - Jackson-Mgmt.-2 - Jackson-Fin.-4-4a - Cheyenne A & L-1 - Cheyenne-Fin.-4 - Chicago-Engr.-2 Mgmt.-1 Fin.-1 A & L-1)

Increased per diem and mileage allowances were made in September 1949 and revised in April 1950 as outlined in Administrative Memorandum MT-M8. These allowances apply equally to the field and work staff. Additional funds for travel allowances were made available by supplemental appropriations approved in October 1949.

We request the employment of additional field engineers because the workload is becoming unbearable; the present staff, even though working long hours overtime without pay, is unable to perform the necessary work and many functions for which we are responsible are being neglected; and also, under the terms of the loan contract these functions of the Engineering Division cannot be transferred to the borrower. (Jackson-Engr.-4)

That in our opinion we are not receiving the proper amount of budget consideration as other divisions with respect to the per man work load and number of employees. Budget funds should be provided commensurate with the increased workload and responsibilities. (Chicago-Engr.-4)

The approved Supplemental Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1950, provides for the hiring of approximately 30 new engineers for field duty. As rapidly as they can be hired and trained, they will be assigned to areas in accordance with the workload. Anyone knowing of any qualified engineers who might be interested in employment in REA is urged to notify either the Chief of the Engineering Division or the Personnel Division.

Finally, it was decided to ask the Chief of the Division if he would consider asking the Department of Agriculture to remove junk from the top of the garage in Court 2. (Employees of the Press and Radio Section explained that the presence of this junk makes a bad impression upon visitors who look down on it from upper floors.) (Washington-Info. Ser.-11)

The junk referred to in this suggestion has been removed.

Urge consideration of maintenance program and establishment of procedure to be followed. (Cheyenne-Engr.-9)

One of the principal aspects of the Supplemental Budget for the fiscal year 1950 was the emphasis placed on the technical operations and maintenance phases of our program. The Engineering Division has established a section for the express purpose of getting the preventive maintenance program underway including the establishment of the necessary procedures.

A staff meeting should be held at least as often as every two weeks in order that all employees may be kept informed of developments within REA. (Washington-Info. Ser.-1)

This suggestion has been adopted.

A typist should be employed for the Press and Radio Section, since the typing done in that section is more than can be done by one secretary if she is to perform the other duties required of her also. (Washington-Info. Ser.-2)

This suggestion has been adopted.

An understanding should be reached with the Stenographic Pool about priority on rush jobs. (Washington-Info. Ser.-3)

Anyone having material that needs to be typed in a hurry should make arrangements with those in charge of the Stenographic Unit ahead of time if possible so that the job may be handled as promptly as possible taking into account all the rush requests received.

Request refresher courses in Washington be limited to two weeks, and that time be planned to enable fieldmen to obtain answers to questions which have developed in his field assignment. (Cheyenne-Engr.-6)

A check with the Region Heads indicates that the duration of the fieldman's visit at headquarters is not a fixed period. The length of time depends on the needs as determined by the field representative and his supervisor taking into consideration travel funds available and work load in the field. In any event, the field man should always have the opportunity to obtain assistance on any problems which he may have.

It was requested that travelers be sure to report the date and hour they go on leave while in the field. Too many travelers have been failing to do this. (Washington-Adm. Ser. Div.-10)

Great care must be exercised by each traveler in submitting an accurate record of his use of leave. It is essential that the time and attendance report agree with the travel reimbursement vouchers with respect to leave. Discrepancies between the two reports result in delaying payment of vouchers until the differences have been rectified.

It was suggested before any leave be changed from one type to another that the employee concerned be notified first. (Washington-Adm. Ser. Div.-12)

If employees keep their leave records (as they have been urged to on the leave record forms provided for that purpose), they will know where they stand on leave.

A suggestion was made that in some way our cooperatives should become better informed regarding the information desired for the approval of headquarters buildings in order to expedite this approval. Some suggestions were made that this could be done by our fieldmen; others, follow up any indications from board minutes, field reports, etc. It was then recommended that the office managers meet and draw up a model letter, or appoint a committee in the Division to work out some sort of a letter for all concerned. (Washington-Mgmt.-3)

It is felt that the publication "Planning a Headquarters Building" gives rather complete general information to borrowers regarding REA's recommendations and requirements. In the event that this booklet does not give all necessary information, it may be desirable for the Management Division to consider developing additional material.

We should have a central location for all forms and packets instead of having them scattered in several different offices. (Washington-Mgmt.-6)

It is agreed that a central location is desirable for such stocks of forms and packets as are kept in the Office of the Chief. The Division informs me that as soon as sufficient space and a person with enough time to maintain the stocks become available, the material will be consolidated.

At the present time this Division has authority to approve the use of general funds up to \$2,000. It has been found that several regions have need to exceed this limitation and the writing of a memorandum is necessary; therefore, it is suggested that the limitation for the approval of the use of general funds be set up to at least \$5,000. (Washington-Mgmt.-1)

Approvals of all general fund expenditures are made by the Office of the Administrator and this authority has not been delegated to any division.

Production control meetings should be held every other week instead of every week. This would allow sufficient time to send out inquiries and obtain replies from the field between successive meetings. This was passed by unanimous consent even though it was pointed out that a similar suggestion had been considered and requested last year. (Washington-Engr.-1)

On several occasions during the past three years, consideration has been given to suggestions that production control meetings be held less frequently in order to give more time for obtaining replies from the field. While it is recognized that there would be some advantage to this practice, it would create a problem of longer meetings and would delay many items that should be handled on a weekly basis. We are following the practice of scheduling items two, three and four weeks ahead for review at production control meetings where division representatives indicate that more than one week will be required to obtain the information needed.

The method used by the Production Control Section in determining the rate of construction and the percent of completion should be revised to correspond with the completion items enumerated on "Engineer's Weekly Report of Construction Progress". Form DS-27R2. At the present time only three items are used by Production Control which result in a distorted picture of the actual status of construction. It is felt that this suggested change would result in a more accurate and equitable method of determining progress rates. (Washington-Engr.-2)

We agree that this suggestion for using the items listed on the engineer's report would result in a more accurate method of calculating the rate of construction progress and percent of work completed. However, for the purpose of the production control system it is felt that the difference between the two methods would not be sufficient to warrant the additional time required to make a calculation on a more detailed basis. It is recognized that the three items used do not reflect items such as conversion and it is expected that such items will be brought out at the production control meetings.

We request that Technical Standards furnish revision sheets every 30 days of materials approved or deleted since publication of last list of approved materials. (Jackson-Engr.-11)

Monthly summaries of changes or additions to the "List of Materials Acceptable for Use on REA-Financed Systems" have been sent to personnel of Engineering and Power Divisions, project managers, supply manufacturers, system engineers and material distributors since February 1949. Copies are now being sent to Management Division personnel.

Urge consideration of wish-bone construction and other improvements in transmission design. (Cheyenne-Engr.-8)

Technical Standards Committee "A" has wish-bone construction under consideration.

Force account construction of large sections of line causes much difficulty in accounting for labor and material on account of poor records in borrower's offices. (Cheyenne-Fin.-7)

Force account construction of large sections places a greater amount of record keeping work on borrowers than if the construction is done by contract. This, in turn, means more audit work for our field auditors. In line with this observation, the recent revision of Engineering Memorandum 170 emphasizes to borrowers the importance of, and their responsibility for, complete and accurate records of labor and materials for construction activities, particularly with reference to force account construction.

Assumption sales of emergency generating equipment. The paper work necessary by the administration on assumption sales follow actual transfers with a long delay. Once the papers covering such a sale leave the division, there is no follow-up as other divisions are not particularly interested. It is recommended that these assumption sales of emergency generating equipment be put on Production Control so that an automatic follow-up will be instituted. There have been cases where the paper work has followed the actual transfer by as long as a year. (Washington-Power-1)

As a result of this and other similar suggestions, an inventory has been made of transfers to serve as a base for re-establishing a control system as suggested.

Office Memorandum. Is there an REA policy stating that inter office memos be kept confidential; that is, not shown or quoted to persons connected with REA-financed systems. (Washington-Power-2)

There seems to be some violation of the confidential reports submitted in the field activities reports (ADM-36) since some unfavorable conditions reported have come back to borrowers. (Cheyenne-Fin.-8)

Although there is no written Policy Bulletin on internal memoranda, it should be definitely understood by all employees that inter-office memoranda and field reports are for internal administrative use only and should not be shown or quoted to persons outside of REA.

The Vise Unit should be instructed never to transfer outgoing correspondence to another unit or division for its approval and initialing without consulting the individual who originated the letter. (Washington-Power-13)

The Mail Review Unit may clear a particular letter with an office other than the one originating the letter where that office has some responsibility for the subject matter discussed. Ordinarily the letter would be dispatched more quickly than if it were returned to the originator to obtain clearance. However, if delay appears unavoidable the originator should be notified. It is very doubtful if a rigid rule as suggested would be a sound practice toward rendering the best possible service to our borrowers and other correspondents.

Registration Office. Couldn't there be a registration office somewhere centrally located where people coming into REA from the cooperatives could register and at the same time be informed that certain employees of REA would like to meet with them (concerning problems of their cooperatives.) (Washington Power-5)

It is very doubtful whether a registration office for cooperative representatives would solve the problem raised by this suggestion. Frequently, we have no advance knowledge of such visits. Further, it is unlikely that employees could keep a registration office currently informed of all the representatives they want to see. An effective location of such an office also would be difficult in view of the numerous entrances to the building.

It is suggested that in order to obtain more expeditious, efficient, and economical line construction, that the proportion of funds loaned for member service extensions be reduced. If necessary, loans should be deferred until the borrower can produce the maps and membership tabulations showing the location of proposed lines and consumers so that the lines can be constructed as an integral unit rather than piece-meal. It was pointed out that a much larger proportion of our loans are being made to cooperatives for member service extensions, frequently without full information being submitted relative to consumer locations. This suggestion was made in line with the Administrator's statement that we must not sacrifice quality for quantity. (Washington-Engr.-10)

As the program of area coverage progresses, the borrowers must necessarily serve "thinner" areas. For this reason, it is important that distribution loans be carefully studied to see that lump sums included for unmapped member-service extensions are held to amounts necessary to cover the cost of connections to be made along lines already existing or included in the mapped mileage of the new loans. In accordance with established practice construction involving major extension of primary lines is to be financed only on the basis of maps and membership tabulations.

The work order procedure for distribution-type borrowers was revised in 1945. This procedure is not adapted for generating and transmission construction. The present work order procedure for generation and transmission is inadequate. It is recommended that a new procedure for generation and transmission facilities be prepared to cover all force-account construction. (Washington-Power-10)

The REA committee which is currently reviewing the work order procedure to determine needed revision is giving attention to the development of an adequate work order procedure for generation and transmission construction.

It was requested that travel requests be submitted more promptly by the various divisions. Too many divisions have been sending the requests in after the travel has been performed. It was also requested that amendments to authorizations be submitted more promptly. (Washington-ASD-8)

This suggestion was also made at the 1948 Departmental "Gripe" session. Our reply pointed out to supervisors that travel requests must be prepared in sufficient time to allow the requests to be approved by the Administrator's office and then forwarded to the Travel unit prior to the date travel is to commence. In general five days should be allowed for each action. All supervisors are expected to follow this procedure.

Correspondence should be filed in the regional offices at least once a week and preferably twice a week by the Central Records Unit. The present filing service is inadequate and results in a considerable loss of time by office personnel due to the length of time before correspondence is filed. (Washington-Engr.-9)

It is felt that the correspondence should be filed twice a week instead of the irregular time in which it is now being filed. The secretaries would like to have the correspondence remain in the office at all times and not be removed to the mail room for sorting. Numerous occasions were mentioned whereby the regional head needed certain letters that were not in the office but in the mail room. This is indeed an inconvenience when the mail could be easily sorted in the regional offices. (Washington-Fin.-9)

At the time these "gripes" were expressed, insufficient personnel and vacation schedules seriously affected adequate filing. Since that time, both personnel and service have improved. A recent check disclosed that filing is now accomplished at least twice a week, and in many instances correspondence is now filed three times each week.

With respect to the problem of sorting in the region as opposed to sorting in Central Records, we feel that it is undesirable to change the present system. Sorting racks are necessary in the efficient operation of sorting, and these racks are too large and unwieldy to permit portability. In addition, by sorting in Central Records Unit, the file clerk can conveniently ask questions of the head and Assistant Head of filing problems. Material brought down to this Unit is never held more than a few hours before it is returned to the region for filing, and any material can be obtained without delay by making a telephone call.

We feel the need for a messenger for the Finance Division who would always be available in dispatching mail from the regional office to the front office and vice versa. Too much of the secretaries' time is spent carrying mail when the regular general messenger is not on duty. In the event it is impossible to get good service, could carts be furnished for carrying the heavy load of mail to and from the front office? (Washington-Fin.-7)

An effort should be made to secure better mail and messenger service, since this service has been quite poor. (Washington-ISD-5)

During the summer months of 1949, it was found necessary to discharge two messengers who were quite lax in attendance, thus resulting in unsatisfactory messenger service in certain divisions. The Mail Unit now has a full staff of competent messengers providing service five times daily. This is generally accepted as adequate service. In addition, a special messenger is available for special runs upon request. Due to budgetary limitations, it is not possible to assign a messenger to each division for full-time service.

Little is done to improve working conditions. The Division is badly in need of more office space which would tend to greater efficiency. Better lighting conditions are also needed. (Washington-Fin.-8)

Efforts should be made to improve lighting and ventilation and to eliminate crowding of offices. One employee made this observation-"Agriculture's South Building in general seems too crowded." When it was planned I was informed there was no intention that so many people would occupy so few square feet. This now shows up in unsatisfactory working conditions in many offices-where desks are placed both away from adequate ventilation and lighting. It is therefore suggested that Plant and Operations be asked to make a survey of efficient working areas, and that if necessary, an appropriation be requested from Congress to modernize the South Building - or those portions of it occupied by REA. (Washington-ISD-10)

The scarcity of office space, whether desirable or undesirable, is critical in the Washington area, and is not confined to this Department. The Administrative Services Division will continue to exert every effort to obtain additional space. The matter has been presented to the Administrator of the General Services Administration for decision, and it is hoped that a favorable solution may be found.

Permanent lighting in this building is controlled by the Public Buildings Administration. In view of the inadequacy of the lighting facilities, we have purchased over a hundred desk lamps and more will be purchased as the budget permits.

Establish a proper routing slip for REA and the Power Division by numerical system so all correspondence can be routed to these persons concerned and the person to take action noted. Establish a messenger's job whose duty will be to make pick-ups every hour thereby speeding up mail service and relieve secretaries of this duty. (Washington-Power-8)

It is felt that the large number of staff members in REA to be listed, would make a standard form of routing slip impracticable. However, a routing slip for internal use within a division is quite practicable where the number of individuals is not excessive. Such a determination is within the province of each division. For usual routing practices, the use of Form AD-514 is recommended.

The system of crediting annual leave should be made to coincide with regulations so that each employee would be credited, on January 1 of each year, with the 26 days annual leave to cover the entire year, instead of the present system. This would lighten the burden of the Payroll Unit since so many change slips would not have to be prepared. (Washington-ASD-11)

Departmental Regulations provide an option to each agency head with respect to crediting leave. We have adopted the optional policy of crediting leave only as it is earned. In the light of experience, we are of the opinion that our present policy is the most equitable one for all employees.

Request that REA make a study of how to handle contracts for small miscellaneous construction and system improvements without competitive bidding. (Chicago-Engr.-8)

Toward the end of 1945, REA reinstated the policy that borrowers not award and execute contracts for construction except as a result of competitive bidding. Present conditions do not appear to justify any change in this policy. Field engineers are requested, however, to furnish complete facts regarding any situations where bidding can be shown to be disadvantageous to a borrower.

It was suggested that the indexing of Administrative Memoranda be simplified so we may determine in the field between the issuance of indices as to whether or not we have all current issues for field use. (Chicago-Mgmt.-5)

This suggestion was adopted and an alphabetical index of Administrative Memoranda is now being issued on a semi-annual basis.

It was suggested that only one copy of a letter be sent to Central Records for filing. Too many people send five or more copies of the same letter for filing whereas only one is needed. (Washington-ASD-3)

The official file copy of letters and memoranda is distinctive by being yellow in color. Since all other copies are destroyed, we should discontinue the practice of sending copies other than the official file copy to Central Records.

Inquiries from the field representatives should be answered--and promptly. (Chicago-A&L-9)

This is our objective in the handling of all correspondence, but it is recognized the volume of work often makes promptness most difficult. The Washington staff is reminded, however, that field representatives are particularly in need of information promptly, in order to carry on their work most effectively.

Speeches made at staff conferences should be limited, when possible, to approximately 15 minutes. Staff conferences should be held in air-conditioned rooms. (Washington-A&L-1)

Presumably this suggestion refers to the last staff conference held in the auditorium. This is a very good suggestion and should be followed as a guide line in planning programs for subsequent staff conferences, however, it is recognized that there will be some exceptional cases where additional time may be required.

Normally, the Auditorium is air-conditioned, but at certain times the power facilities in the building do not permit the air-conditioning equipment to operate at its full capacity. It was unfortunate that our meeting happened to be scheduled at such a time.

When changes in procedure are established, which will affect the flow of work between offices, the application of the new procedure should commence at the regional office level and be applied only to new work and not to work already completed by the regional office. (Washington-A&L-2)

This is a very good suggestion and every attempt should be made to follow it. However, some changes are made which necessarily must become effective immediately. It is realized that on occasion this may involve some extra work.

Efforts should be made that staff conferences not only accomplish their purposes, but should be more interesting and beneficial to those attending. (Washington-A&L-4)

The Division Chief informs me that he is constantly striving to achieve this objective. He has indicated that he would like to have specific suggestions for improving the meetings.

Weekly meetings should be held for the personnel in each region and section office by the region or section head to inform the personnel of instructions and decisions made in division conferences and of pertinent changes in policy and procedure by other authorities. (Washington-A&L-5)

As a result of this suggestion, the Division Chief has informed me that he has requested his regional and section heads to hold periodic meetings with their staffs to inform them of pertinent changes in policies and procedures that affect their work.

Procedural changes and directives originating with the front office of a division should be cleared with the other divisions involved before being issued to the regional offices. The Chiefs' offices of the other divisions, in turn, should notify their regional offices of the change. (Washington-A&L-6)

The example cited in this suggestion illustrates the importance of advising other divisions of changes in practices.

In order to avoid recurrence of such cases, Division Chiefs are reminded that any changes in the practices or procedures of their divisions that affect the work of the other divisions should be concurred in by the other divisions concerned before they are put into effect.

It was suggested that all employees going on vacation submit SF-71's prior to departure so that there would not be the problem of signing Time and Attendance Reports. (Washington-ASD-7)

Division employees should report leave the day it is taken so that records do not have to be changed once leave has been recorded. (Washington-ISD-4)

Report to the Time and Attendance Clerk as soon as possible after sick leave and annual leave (if it was not anticipated) has been taken. All Annual Leave must be initialed in advance of the leave time. (Washington-Power-7)

Each employee is requested, as a matter of administrative convenience, to report leave promptly to the Time and Attendance Clerk in order that leave records may be maintained accurately and currently. Department regulations provide that where annual leave reported on time and attendance reports extends into a subsequent reporting period, employees may initial, in advance under or beside the last date of absence on each report on which such extended leave shall be recorded. Thus, the mandatory initialing of all annual leave in advance is not required by Regulations and would, we believe, prove impracticable. In cases of extended vacation leave, it will be desirable from the standpoint of convenience to submit a S.F. 71 for approval prior to departure.

Transportation on official business to points in Washington and vicinity is difficult--it takes too much time to get tokens--means by which travel can be performed should be clarified and the procedure should be made known to all personnel. It is suggested that tokens be furnished to each Division for the use of employees of the respective Division who are required to conduct official business at various points in the District. Having personnel spend 15 minutes to an hour to get tokens is certainly uneconomical and aggravating. (Washington-TSD-1)

In line with this suggestion, arrangements have been made to furnish a supply of tokens to Divisions which have indicated need for them. A representative of the respective Division Chiefs may secure a reasonable supply of tokens from the Communications and Records Management Section, Room 0226 South Building, by merely signing for them. It will be necessary for each such Division to maintain a record of the use of each token and by whom used, in the same manner as is done for accountability for air mail postage stamps. A copy of this accountability record shall be submitted to the Communications and Records Management Section at the end of each month for record purposes.

Washington representatives shall be diligent in keeping field personnel fully informed of all decisions affecting borrowers in their respective areas of responsibility. This refers particularly to conferences held in person and by telephone at which the field representative is not present. (Chicago-A&L-2)

The need for this kind of liaison is recognized and all divisions are urged to make special effort to comply with this suggestion.

New field employees should be more thoroughly oriented in their areas of responsibility. This is established policy within REA and Supervisors are urged to make every effort to carry it out. (Chicago-A&L-3)

Regional heads should give new field representatives more assistance in determining the relative importance of various field problems. (Chicago-A&L-10)

All field people are given as much orientation as possible in Washington before being sent to the field.

We recognize the importance and necessity of reports and forms. With particular reference to A & L Form 91 (Field Representatives Monthly Time Report and Borrowers Visited), we accept its value but feel that no value can accrue over long usage that will not appear after two or three month's usage; therefore, we recommend the form be discontinued August 31, 1949. (Jackson-A&L-2)

Form AL-91 was based upon one (1) year's reporting in order to give adequate and complete data for budgetary man-hour requirements as well as other needed information concerning activities charged to the A & L Division. It has been determined that a complete analysis of the data furnished by field representatives is not possible for a period less than one year and therefore, the form will need to be used at least until June 30, 1950.

We recommend that it would be helpful to the program and improve efficiency if A & L examiners could make an occasional trip to the field. Few examiners have had field work experience and some are assigned to regions where they have never lived nor visited and therefore have no personal knowledge of the social and economic factors found in the area. (Jackson-A&L-3)

In several instances, A & L examiners have been sent to the field on special assignments. We have long recognized the need and have been in accord with this suggestion. Lack of adequate budget for travel funds, plus insufficient examiner personnel to cope with accelerated loan program during past few years has prevented us from sending more examiners on field trips.

We recommend that there be no move to discontinue or to curtail regional office weekly newsletters going to the field personnel but rather they be expanded to give: (1) more details about the coordination of program efforts that goes on in Washington between the various divisions and sections, (2) direct contacts between Washington and the borrowers, and (3) pertinent information affecting the program on a national scale. (Jackson-A&L-5)

We wish to suggest the continuance of the regional newsletter in those regions now sending them and the adoption of this letter in those regions not now circulating them. We also wish to suggest that a greater effort be made to incorporate material that has not already been published in other periodicals. (Cheyenne-A&L-2)

No move has been made to discontinue or curtail the A&L weekly newsletters going to field personnel. Continued improvements in the quality of these newsletters is the objective of those preparing them.

The present meter loop procedure is very confusing to borrowers' personnel and causes considerable difficulty in audit work. Why should meter loops be handled in a manner different from any other construction or work orders? (Cheyenne-Fin.-5)

With A&L, Finance and the Office of the Solicitor collaborating, a new meter loop procedure was recently developed. This procedure was considered to reduce details required of borrowers to a minimum. If confusion still exists with certain borrowers, suggestions for further simplification are requested.

Washington representatives, when entering the field, should furnish their itineraries to field personnel mutually concerned with the subject material. (Chicago-A&L-5)

As a result of similar suggestion at the field conferences in 1948, a memorandum was sent to the Washington staff urging them to inform the field personnel of proposed travel itineraries whenever possible. Those instructions are still in effect and the Washington staff is again reminded of them.

All loan applications should be checked and approved by the field representative concerned prior to consideration by the Regional Heads. (Chicago-A&L-6)

We have adopted the policy of spot field checking loan applications prior to submission to the Washington office.

Consideration should be given to the assignment of additional personnel to the Acquisition Section in A & L in order that acquisition matters may be handled more expeditiously. (Chicago-A&L-7)

This has been under consideration for some time. Lack of funds prevented the expansion of the Acquisition Staff.

Regional Heads should convey important decisions to borrowers through the field representatives concerned. (Chicago-A&L-8)

Field people whenever possible, now receive copies of regional office correspondence to borrowers. To the extent possible, decisions other than those given by correspondence, are channeled through field people. However, it is recognized that it would be impracticable to convey to borrowers decisions through field representatives.

Provide new field representatives with printed manual containing material descriptive of the entire REA program. (Chicago-A&L-11)

New A & L field personnel are given all pertinent material that is available. Other material should and will be developed as need arises.

The time allotted to the divisional field personnel meetings (the "gripè" session) is not long enough. (Cheyenne-Fin.-12)

This matter will be considered by the committee making arrangements for the next series of field conferences.

That each region will schedule its own field personnel meeting at their option with the approval of the Administration. Does the administration approve of these regional meetings of personnel from time to time to discuss matters? (Chicago-Engr.-2)

These suggestions have been adopted and several regions have already held such meetings. Results will be studied and improvements made as additional meetings are held in the future.

We should have a central location for all forms and packets instead of having them scattered in several different offices. (Washington-Mgmt.-6)

General stocks of forms are, of course, in the Administrative Services Division. Small stocks of some of these forms, and stocks of some forms peculiar to the Management Division, are kept in several rooms affiliated with the Chief's Office. It would certainly be convenient if most of these could be in one place, but there is no one place that has sufficient space, nor is there any one person with sufficient time available to accomplish this.

Care should be taken to furnish all available files and records to employees entering new areas of responsibility. (Chicago-A&L-4)

This is being done as far as we know.